

UPDATE ON THE  
PRAYING GROUNDS  
PROJECT

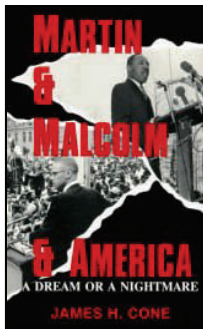
Osman Ali, a recent migrant to Cleveland and a member of the Somali Bantu Islamic community, shared his oral history with Dr. Williams in December.



Serreta Archer, a member of Cleveland's St. Timothy Missionary Baptist Church, became our 100th interviewee in March.



On April 4, 1968, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. In observance of the 40th anniversary of this tragedy, Dr. Regennia N. Williams will lead a discussion on Dr. James M. Cone's **Martin & Malcolm & America** on Thursday, April 17, 2008, 1 - 2:30 p.m., in MC 135 (Black Studies). Admission is free. Books are available for purchase in the CSU Bookstore at East 24th and Euclid Avenue. For more information, call 523-7182 or 687-3655.



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TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INITIATIVE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE HISTORY OF AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA (RASHAD)

SACRED MUSIC THAT IS 'BEYOND CATEGORY'  
THE ARTISTRY OF DUKE ELLINGTON AND RICHARD SMALLWOOD

By Regennia N. Williams, PhD  
Founder and Editor



Duke Ellington

In 1999, the year in which people across the globe paused to observe the centennial of Duke Ellington's birth, musicologists frequently used the composer's own words to remind listeners that Ellington was, indeed, "beyond category." The three sacred concerts are among his most-celebrated works.

Produced in the 1960s and 1970s, these concerts represent the artistry of Ellington's mature years. In describing the works, Ellington said, "These concerts are not musical settings to the liturgy of any religious denomination. I think of myself as a messenger boy, one who tries to bring messages to people."

Today, 34 years since his passing, both the recordings and the abundant critical analysis of these works offer students of African American music and religious history magnificent examples of Ellington's efforts to explore the links

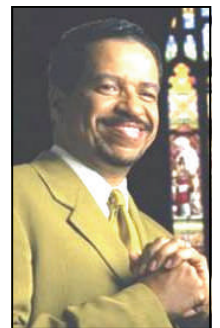
between the sacred and the secular in world music.

Fortunately, Ellington is not the only African American whose musical genius places him in a class by himself. In the 21st century, Richard Smallwood is revolutionizing the music of Christendom in ways that lead many listeners to suggest that he, too, is "beyond category."

While Ellington was assembling orchestras and choirs for his sacred concerts, Richard Smallwood was trying his hand at diversifying post-secondary course offerings. At Howard University, a historically black institution in Washington, D.C., Smallwood insisted that there was room in the academy for the formal study of African American music, including gospel and jazz. He composed and performed gospel and other styles of music during his undergraduate years, and he went on to graduate cum laude with a double major in voice and piano.

Smallwood's music continues to reflect many of the lessons learned before and during the Howard University years. Steeped in the traditions of the Black church, this gifted artist listened to and learned from European and African American masters. His music is syncretistic, and he frequently blends instrumentation and voicing from European concert traditions with performance styles that are associated with African American sacred and secular music.

Like Duke Ellington and others who came before him, Richard Smallwood believes that it is possible to merge elements from multiple traditions, and help diverse groups of listeners find common cultural grounds in our global community. Scholarly studies by Berniece Johnson Reagan and Anthony Heilbut suggest that Smallwood's music is doing just that.



Richard Smallwood

\* Ellington and Smallwood recordings are available in the University Library.

\* Coming in our next issue: "Spiritual Gifts: The Music of the African American Church"

More Good News!

We are now on **MySpace** and **Facebook!** Visitors to these sites can participate in discussions, and read updates on the Praying Grounds project. Our discussion topic for April is **Faith and Politics in America.**

## MEET OUR RESEARCH TEAM



**Ebony Cooper** (left) is an undergraduate student pursuing a double major in Social Studies and History. Her anticipated graduation date is December 2008. She has conducted research for and served as a Supplemental Instructor in HIS 215, "African American History to 1877." In addition to her work with Praying Grounds, Ebony is involved in another oral history project, Our Stories. Through Our Stories, Ebony shares the history of the Cedar and Central neighborhoods with high school students. Our Stories is part of a larger effort to bridge the generation gap between adolescents and senior citizens.

**Barbara A. Jernigan** (right) is completing a double major in Communication and Religion. Barbara is very active in the campus community. She recently had a starring role in the play, *Fifth of July*, and she is a member of the Black Student Union. Barbara also volunteers her time with the Veteran's Administration Hospital and for political activities, such as the Clinton-Obama debate that took place here at Cleveland State. She will complete her academic program in December 2008.



**Chaitanya Kadem** (left) is a graduate student in Cleveland State University's Department of Electrical Engineering. He graduated in 2007 with his Bachelor of Science degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University. He will complete his graduate program in December 2008. Chaitanya is originally from Hyderabad, India, and he came to the United States in August 2007. One of his favorite musicians is A. R. Rehman, a music director from India.

**Kathleen Marcy** (right) is a graduate student pursuing her Masters in History. She graduated from the University of Dayton in May of 2007 and has worked as a graduate assistant in the Department of History since the beginning of her studies at Cleveland State University. Kathleen's work with Praying Grounds includes serving as associate editor of the newsletter and creating biographical sketches for oral history interviews. She will graduate in December 2008, and she hopes to continue her education.



**Ramon Smith** (left) is completing a double major in History and Anthropology and a double minor in Black Studies and Native American Studies. She graduated from Cuyahoga Community College in 2003 and expects to graduate from CSU in 2008. She is a member of the Black Student Union, the Native American Alliance, and the Forensic Anthropology Club. In addition to co-curricular activities—including summer field research in anthropology and her work on the Praying Grounds project—Ramon volunteers at local elementary schools and daycare centers, and she prepares tax returns for people in her neighborhood.

**Atul Tanawade** (right) is working towards his Masters of Science in Mechanical Engineering. He studied at India's University of Mumbai, where he earned awards for merit and distinction while completing his Bachelor's of Science degree. Atul worked with the Praying Grounds project in the fall of 2007 and January and February of 2008. He recently accepted a graduate assistantship in Institutional Diversity.



**Pavan Kambhatla** (left) holds a Bachelors Degree in Electronics from India's Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University. He is a Masters Degree candidate in the Electrical Engineering program, and his expected graduation date of December 2008. He served as a research assistant in the College of Engineering, and he recently completed an internship with AT&T Cellular Communications, where he worked as an RF Engineer.



# BOOKS AND MORE

RAMON SMITH, EDITOR

*The seminal publications featured here continue to enlighten and inspire 21st-century readers.*

**Kwame A. Appiah and Henry L. Gates, editors**  
***Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience.* Basic Civitas Books, 1999. (\*Second edition, Oxford University Press, 2005)**

This book is a tribute to the legacy of Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois, the visionary scholar who determined that the world needed a compendium of scientific information and knowledge about the history, cultures, religions, and social institutions of people of African descent.

With the assistance of Nigerian Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, Harvard professors Kwame Appiah and Henry Louis Gates created *Africana* with the specific goal of completing the work that Dr. Du Bois started just before his death in 1963.

This book contains hundreds of maps, tables, charts, and photographs, with entries ranging from “aardvark and affirmative action” to “Zulu and zydeco.” *Africana* also includes articles on the history of each African nation and every major cultural, religious, and political movement in Africa and the Americas.

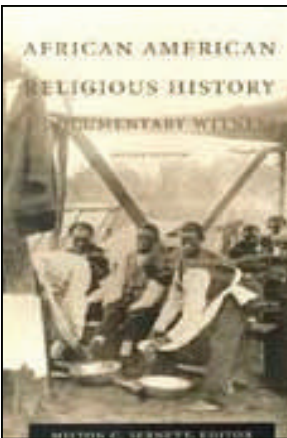
Every article is cross-referenced to guide the reader through various topics, including the history of slavery, the civil rights movement, the history of ancient African civilizations, and the black experience in countries such as France, India, and Russia.

*Africana* is an excellent reference tool for anyone interested in the study of Africa and the African Diaspora.



**Alhaji Papa Susso**, griot and master kora player, performed in the CSU Art Gallery during African American History Month. Dr. Barbara Hoffman (far left) coordinated activities for Papa Susso’s visit, and his oral history interview and latest CD are now part of the “Praying Grounds” collection.

**Milton Sernett. *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness.* Duke University Press, 1999.**



Milton Sernett presents a thorough examination of the merger of diverse religious traditions in Antebellum America, and he also discusses the formation of present day African American religious institutions. *African American Religious History* contains an excellent collection of primary source documents. The volume allows readers to view history through the eyes of those who made it. Included are Olaudah Equiano’s description of “Traditional Igbo Religion and Culture” and Nat Turner’s ideas on “Religion and Slave Insurrection.” James Cone’s essay “Black Theology and the Black Church,” considers the challenges faced by

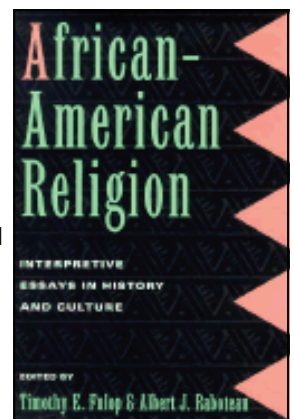
many church leaders in the second half of the 20th century.

*African American Religious History* is an excellent companion volume for students using Appiah and Gates’ *Africana*. It sheds light upon the process by which enslaved Africans formed new African American religious traditions, addressed problems caused by their forced separation from Africa, and fought racial oppression.

**Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau, editors**  
***African-American Religion: Interpretative Essays in History and Culture.* Routledge, 1997.**

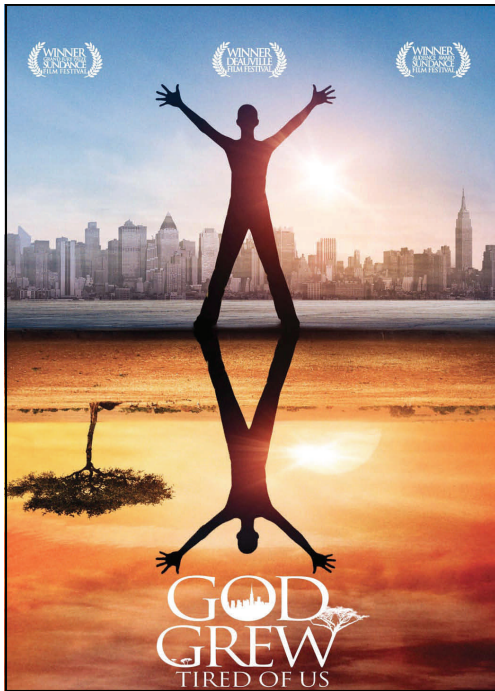
This collection introduces readers to the contemporary scholarly study of African American religious experiences and the institutions that emerged from those experiences. *African-American Religion* works well as a reader for students, teachers, and others interested in religion and history.

The essays focus on specific themes, including the presence of Africa in American culture and religion. The volume also addresses issues associated with sexism in the church, the emergence of gospel music, W.E.B. Du Bois’ concept of “double consciousness,” and Haitian Voodoo traditions as evidence of African cultural retention. This book is an excellent introduction to the diverse traditions in African-American religion.



## AUDIO-VISUAL NEWS AND REVIEWS

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY'S COLLECTION



**"A moving documentary that informs, entertains, and inspires . . ."**

Claudia Puig, *USA Today*



Photo: Bill Rieter

**John Bul Dau (seated left) is featured in "God Grew Tired of Us,"** the award-winning documentary on the "Lost Boys" and the strife caused by religious, social, and cultural conflicts in the Sudan. The documentary is now part of the Praying Grounds collection. John Bul Dau visited CSU in February to deliver the luncheon keynote address for the College of Education and Human Services' Fifth Annual Partnership Conference. Also pictured are Dr. Clifford Bennett (seated right), conference co-chair; Dr. Regennia Williams (standing left) and Carolyn Champion-Sloan.

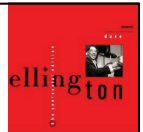
### WEBSITES OF INTEREST



**United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization**  
<http://portal.unesco.org/> \* For Information on archives, search the Communications and Information Resources section.

**Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life**  
<http://pewforum.org/>

### SOUND RECORDINGS



**Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts** are included in the 24-CD set, "Duke Ellington Centennial Edition: Complete RCA Victor Records, 1927-1973."

## BOOK EDITOR'S WINTER PICKS

- Clarke, Kamari M. *Mapping Yoruba Networks: Power and Agency in the Making of Transnational Communities*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Dallam, Marie W. *Daddy Grace: A Celebrity Preacher and His House of Prayer*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.
- Davis, Morris L. *Methodist Unification: Christianity and the Politics of Race In The Jim Crow Era*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.
- Espinosa, Gaston and Mario T. Garcia, eds. *Mexican American Religions: Spirituality, Activism, and Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Garoutte, Claire and Anneke Wambaugh, eds. *Crossing the Water: A Photographic Path to The Afro-Cuban Spirit World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.



## AUDIO-VISUAL NEWS AND REVIEWS

### RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY'S COLLECTION

By Ramon Smith

**"Ties that Bind"** (DVD, 2006) focuses on women's grassroots efforts to create an interfaith movement for social change.

The filmmakers interview seven leaders from a variety of faith communities. The women are Rev. Ann Gonzalez of the United Church of Christ, Rabbi Andrea London of Beth Emet Synagogue; Sisters Pat Bergen and Kathy Sherman of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Karen Danielson, Public Education and Outreach leader for the Muslim American Society; Aisheh Said, Qur'an teacher at the Mosque Foundation of Bridgeview; and Rev. Willie T. Barrow, chairman emeritus of Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

All seven women are convinced that their faith mandates that they work for social justice, and they explain that their spiritual expressions help forge the ties that bind people together across a variety of religious and cultural boundaries.

Rev. Gonzalez, for example, established the "Grace House," which helps felons and substance abusers re-enter society. Aisheh Said formed a Girl Scout group that allows Muslim girls to earn their badges using traditional cultural expressions, including dance. Said's efforts are designed to help break down negative stereotypes and reaffirm positive self images for Muslim girls. In a similar fashion, Rev. Barrow emphasized the importance of emotionally-charged African American sacred music and singing that lifts worshipers' spirits.

Promotional materials for the documentary spend a significant amount of time discussing Islam in the post-9/11 world, but the film only mentioned the topic once in a discussion about the dangers of misinterpreting or misrepresenting religious ideologies. In the final analysis, the documentary suggests that there is a need for interfaith, grassroots organization, if Americans are to gain a thorough understanding of the nation's religious diversity.



## BOOK EDITOR'S WINTER PICKS

Gioia, Ted. *Healing Songs*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Majid, Anouar. *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Palmie, Stephan. *Wizards and Scientists: Explorations in Afro-Cuban Modernity and Tradition*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.

Peterson, Anna and Manuel A. Vazquez, eds. *Latin American Religions: Histories and Documents in Context*. New York: New York University Press, 2008.

Smith, R. Drew. *New Day Begun: African American Churches and Civic Culture in Post Civil Rights America*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Taylor, Cynthia. A. *Philip Randolph: The Religious Journey of an African American Labor Leader*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

# SEEN AND HEARD IN CLEVELAND

In the season of Ohio's March 4th Democratic Primary, the presidential candidates and others spent a lot of time in Cleveland and at Cleveland State University. Our team was there to witness and to help document these historic moments.



Photo Captions (Top to Bottom) : Ebony Cooper and actor Forest Whitaker, Chelsea Clinton and Chaitanya Kadem, Michelle Obama, Rev. Dr. Marvin McMickle (foreground left) and Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Barack Obama, Kahmal (left) and Keyma Flight.

# WEB UPDATES

By Kathleen Marcy

In order to get the Praying Grounds message to the public, we have taken a big step. We are now part of the Web in a much broader sense, and the project can be found on MySpace and Facebook!

These social networking sites are popular with high school and college students, entrepreneurs, and other professionals. Our pages on MySpace and Facebook provide information on Praying Grounds activities, program updates, and dialogues regarding current events.

Each week we compile news articles regarding politics, religion, and social history, and we use these articles as discussion starters on our Facebook group page. The current topic is **Faith and Politics in America.**

We are also placing more information on our Cleveland Memory page, including our oral history interviews. The Praying Grounds page now includes an "Interview of the Month," and Darlene Darby-Baldwin will be the featured narrator through April 2008.

In the coming months, we will complete interview transcripts for every oral history in the collection. Once they are edited, the interviews and transcripts will be accessible via the website.

All of the new features are designed to make the site more user-friendly and more interactive, and allow people to find information quickly.

(continued on page 7)

## PROFILE: Darlene Darby-Baldwin

Featured Narrator for  
The Praying Grounds Oral History Project

Darlene Darby-Baldwin is a Cleveland native and the daughter of W.E. Darby and Kareema Aszal-Darby. Mrs. Darby-Baldwin's father was a lifelong member of the Baptist church, and her mother was a Muslim.



As a child, Mrs. Darby-Baldwin attended her mother's mosque and her father's church, Friendship Baptist Church. 55th. As a young adult, she joined Mt. Sinai Baptist Church.

After her marriage to Danny Baldwin, she joined Second Tabernacle Baptist Church. The Baldwins have two daughters and a son, and the couple currently attends the Warrensville Road Community Baptist Church in Maple Heights, Ohio.

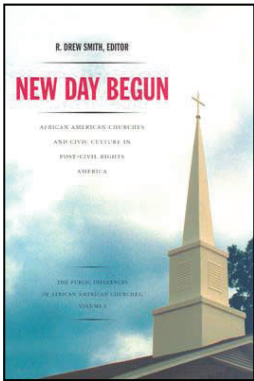
Darby-Baldwin attended the Cleveland Public Schools, and she graduated from John Adams High School in 1972. She studied in France for a year after high school and went on to earn degrees from John Carroll University and Case Western Reserve University.

A successful business owner, Mrs. Darby-Baldwin is also a veteran actress, having performed in numerous plays at Karamu House.

Source: *Praying Grounds interview with Darlene Darby-Baldwin, March 2007*



## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS



### PUBLIC INFLUENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES

By Atul Tanawade

The research continues for our survey project, **Church and State: Greater Cleveland's African American Faith Communities and Public Policy**. The Church and State research builds upon a scholarly tradition that R. Drew Smith and others established with the publication of *New Day Begun* and *Long March Ahead*.

Our team worked on acquiring a database of churches last fall. Thus far, we have distributed hundreds of surveys to individuals in our target population. The survey instrument includes questions about the war in Iraq, civil rights, the economy, gay and lesbian rights, women in ministry, and variety of community issues. At the present time, our rate of return is approximately 20%, but this is only the preliminary stage of our work. In the next stage, we will use the same questions for a telephone survey, and we will continue to target members of churches in the seven-county area of Northeast Ohio.

### SPRING BREAK IN NORTH CAROLINA



Dr. Regennia Williams, who was granted Visiting Scholar's status at UNC Chapel Hill, traveled south to continue her research on the *Wings Over Jordan*. While at UNC, she visited the Stone Center for Black Culture and History and met with the director, Dr. Joseph Jordan (above).

## MANUSCRIPTS AND DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS

By Chaitanya Kadem

The documentary portion of our project benefited greatly from our collaborative work with the Digital Productions staff in the University Library. With their assistance, we were able to update our website using image acquisition station software.

Recent updates include materials on the Rev. Dr. Alfred Waller, the Shiloh Baptist Church, and the entire collection of materials on the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses.

Kiffany Francis led a training session for the RASHAD team, and library patrons can now access the new Praying Grounds digital materials in the Cleveland Memory online archive.

In the future, we will continue to work closely with the library to stay abreast of technological developments that impact our digital collections.



Archival photo of Rev. Dr. Alfred Waller



The University Library's Kiffany Francis leads a training session for RASHAD employees.

## WEB UPDATES

(continued from page 6)

Finally, the biographical sketches on each interviewee will be placed on the website as well.

This information will give a general background and life history of the interviewee and highlight particularly interesting information.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Wings Over Jordan**

**Workshop and Scholarship Award Program**

Saturday, April 26, 2008, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

CSU Music and Communication Building

**"Our City, Our Music, Our History" Exhibition**

Opens Tuesday, April 15, 2008

CSU, Library Special Collections

**"Martin & Malcolm & America" Book Discussion**

Thursday, April 17, 2008, 1 p.m. in MC 137 (Black Studies).

**Free Admission.. For more information, call 523-7182.**



**Above:** Playwright Margaret Ford Taylor is pictured here with Eddie "Blue" Sands after a performance of "Double Nickel Blues," which had its world premiere at CSU during the Wings Over Jordan 70th Anniversary Celebration.

## RASHAD AND PRAYING GROUNDS: ON CAMPUS, IN THE COMMUNITY, AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY!



**Above:** Members of the Warrensville Road Community Baptist Church pose with Dr. Regennia Williams after an African American History Month presentation in Maple Heights, Ohio. Pictured (left to right) are Janetta Hammock, Dr. Williams, Maryann Freeman, and Lynn Panell.

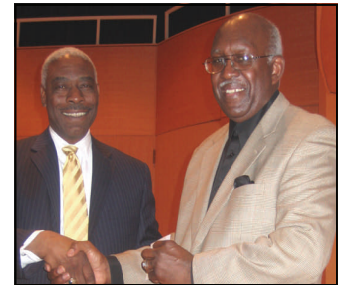


**Above:** Members of Cincinnati, Ohio's Historic Union Baptist Church met with Dr. Regennia Williams after their presentations at the annual meeting of the National Association of African American Studies in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Pictured are (left to right) Donna Mack, Dr. Williams, Carolyn Davis, Dr. Carolyn Turner, and Terra Strong.



**Left:** Dr. Regennia Williams and Dr. Brenda Smith after a Kent State University (Ohio) presentation on oral history.

**Right:** James Catledge (left) and Dr. William Woods at CSU's Wings Over Jordan Choral Festival.



# RASHAD

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